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UNCLAS HARARE 000196

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S
USDOC FOR ROBERT TELCHIN
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: BFIF PROJECT REPORT: EMBASSY TRADE FAIR PROMOTES
IT EXPORTS

Summary

1. (SBU) An Embassy-hosted trade fair promoting U.S. information technology (IT) products on Feb. 3 drew an estimated 6,000-8,000 visitors and, according to a post-event survey, generated orders worth US\$ 374,000.

Visitors Both Browsed and Purchased

2. (SBU) With assistance from U.S. Commercial Service in Johannesburg, the Embassy's economic-commercial section organized the one-day trade fair at the local Sheraton Hotel. Thirty-four private sector exhibitors took part, marketing products for Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, NCR, Cisco and many others. The exhibitors paid for their own stands, the directory and ten prizes for a raffle. They transported sales representatives or equipment from South Africa. In contrast to other trade fairs in Zimbabwe, the Embassy's event featured U.S. exports and charged neither an exhibitor's fee nor admission to the public. As a result, the fair was frequented heavily, drawing 6,000-8,000 visitors.

3. (SBU) While many attendees wanted only to catch a glimpse of the latest IT products from the U.S., others came to place orders. The Embassy spent two weeks direct-marketing the fair to IT managers at the 300 largest local firms, and the Ambassador plugged the event on several business and technology radio/television programs. According to our post-event questionnaire, the fair generated a collective US\$ 374,000 in new orders. Exhibitors unanimously agreed that it was worth their considerable time and expense to take part.

Program Assessment

4. (SBU) We believe the trade fair provided a suitable venue for U.S. IT firms to sell their wares and was worth our US\$ 4,000 budget. More importantly, the fair offered these firms an alternative venue to the annual Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF), which the GOZ has increasingly used for propaganda purposes. Furthermore, the fair was also a public relations success (septel), providing the Ambassador with several opportunities to publicly counter GOZ misinformation about U.S. policies.

5. (SBU) The fair also provided companies with a rare opportunity to gain access to the GOZ's key economic decision maker, Reserve Bank Governor Gono, who toured the fair with the Ambassador for an hour. While making the rounds, Gono promised several CEOs larger low-interest loans or greater quantities of foreign exchange. We plan to press the RBZ Governor to make good on these promises.

6. (U) Post wishes to thank EB/CIB Dennis Winstead for financial support and other guidance. Our detailed accounting of expenses will follow via septel.
DELL